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AUTHOR Kauffman, Earl
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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the increasing number of senior citizens currently on college campuses. The author discusses some special programs made available by several universities to retirees who return to school. These programs offer special scholarships, counseling services, and seminars. Some of the universities specifically mentioned are the University of Kentucky, the University of Connecticut, the University of New Hampshire, the University of Vermont, the University of Rhode Island, the University of Oklahoma, Utah, and Oregon State. The author also includes a section of off-campus programs that are sponsored by city or county boards of education. (RWP)

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AGING AND THE COLLEGE CURRICULUM

Earl Kauffman, Director
Council on Aging
University of Kentucky

The face of higher education is beginning to show the wrinkles of time-earned character. Real silver hair is spotted in the laboratories. The well modulated views of experienced grandparents are being expressed in class discussions and written reports. A generation of retirees is mingling with the untried youth on many college campuses. This trend, always there but greatly augmented in the past decade, will probably continue to grow as older people find new life satisfactions for themselves in the intellectual and social life that for so long has been almost exclusively reserved for young college men and women.

Older people are returning to colleges and universities for many reasons. For some it is to realize a life-long ambition to "go to college," a dream interrupted for so many by the tragedies of their times: wars, depressions, social pressures, and ill health. Many older people are coming back to the campus to learn the lessons skipped or that they didn't learn the first time through. Quite a few who have retired are seeking new roles--not jobs for pay, necessarily, but things to do which will bring new purpose to their lives. Almost always these new students are experiencing a life in their morale that comes from being involved intellectually, socially,

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and physically in experiences which are satisfying to them. They also are quite aware of the prestige of being a college student, an honor bestowed by society which replaces the empty nothingness of retirement.

Older people--the retired group, that is--are finding new excitement through their life as college students. By the very nature of campus activities they are in frequent shoulder-rubbing, eye-to-eye, and voice-to-voice contact with young people who also are college students. Many of their professors are almost of retirement age which contributes to easy rapport. Classwork and assignments are hard work but there are relatively few distractions to compete for study time. With most of life behind them the older scholar has many experiences to which he can relate the materials of his lessons. The camaraderie between other older scholars and with the young cohort groups replaces the loneliness induced by the loss of peers which occurs upon retirement.

New roles are emerging for older people as they continue their education on campuses. These are not the kind that sends them back into the production lines or offices. The roles they are finding are those over which they exercise control of time, energy, and purpose. Some older people paint, others write, a few lecture on popular or esoteric subjects. The variety and intensity of volunteer services rendered by the older scholars are placing stimulating challenges before their young friends while at the same time contributing much to the achievement of agency goals. Occasionally an older scholar finds a new career for himself in unexpected fields. Most recently

a group of older scholars has undertaken to prepare themselves to become senior advisors to decision makers.

Part I - The Campus Scene

A number of colleges and universities are beginning to provide opportunities for older people to continue their education as regular students. One such institution is the University of Kentucky. It is here that the Herman L. Donovan Fellowship for Senior Citizens has been available since 1964. This program annually enrolls about 225 people above the age of 65 on the main campus at Lexington and about a similar number at the fourteen community colleges affiliated with the University. Because the Donovan program is one of the oldest and perhaps most comprehensive, it will be presented in some detail in the hope that you will go home and not rest until something like it is provided by the institutions of higher education, both public and private, in your own state.

The Donovan Fellowship is a living memorial to the late Dr. Herman L. Donovan, President, University of Kentucky, 1940-1955. In the latter years of his tenure he attended a seminar on aging at the University of Michigan where he met Dr. Wilma Donohue, Dr. Clark Tibbitts, and other pioneer leaders in social gerontology. From that summer on Dr. Donovan was a strong advocate of higher education for people who are retired. In a paper he wrote for the Kentucky Committees on Education and the Uses of Free Time, in preparation for the 1961 White House Conference on Aging, Dr. Donovan proposed that all colleges and universities, both public and private, should throw open the gates

of their campuses to older people so they could pursue their interests in learning as long as they lived, and, he added, they should be invited to come without the payment of fees. His reasoning was very valid then--it is just as appropriate today--our colleges and universities owe their greatness to the work and support of people now grown old. Through gifts, taxes, votes, and dedication they supported higher education often at considerable personal sacrifice. They believed so much in a college education that they saw to it that their sons and daughters got it even though it was a privilege denied to themselves.

The Board of Trustees, in 1962, created the Council on Aging and made it a part of University Extension. In 1964 the Board established the Donovan Fellowship according to Dr. Donovan's design. Now any person over 65, living anywhere, can come to the University and take any course listed in the general catalog for credit, or as an auditor, without the payment of fees. The only criteria for admission is a personal estimate of health good enough to stand the rigors of academic life, and a motivation sufficient to accept the challenge of being a college student.

There are no real reasons why you can't and shouldn't insist that a Donovan type program be made available in the institutions of higher education in your own communities. It is one of the most inexpensive services imaginable because no new classes are required and enrollment is on a space available basis in existing courses. No new classes were created for Donovan scholars in the beginning and now we have only two: Drawing and Painting, and the Forum. The art class is taught by a retired teacher who is paid a stipend

which fits the social security limits on earnings. The Forum is conducted by the director of the Council.

Donovan scholars register for regular university classes and sit alongside boys and girls young enough to be their grandchildren, as they sometimes are. Most Donovans audit one or more classes per semester. Some work for credit in which case they must meet the prerequisites for the courses they take. A few ambitious souls pursue degree programs and four have graduated in various baccalaurate programs, and one with a Master of Arts. Although there is much interest in the doctorate programs and we have several applications in various stages of processing, no one has yet been admitted.

The Council devotes a great amount of time to developing the applications of people who want to be Donovan Scholars, to counseling with them on personal and academic problems, to help with registration and to keeping in touch with them throughout the year. Before any prospective student is registered for a course permission to do so is secured from the instructor, often a time consuming process. Although nearly all of the registration process is done in our office, the Registrar's office finalizes the work. Descriptive brochures are prepared and an extensive correspondence is carried on with interested people from all over the world who write and call for information.

Some states, for various reasons, limit their programs to residents of the state. This is not the case at the University of Kentucky. An interesting outcome of the unlimited restrictions is that many fine people from other states have taken up permanent residence in Lexington. Those who come from out-of-state for one or more semesters remain good friends of the University and serve

as sources of information about the institution and the Commomwealth wherever they go.

The Council on Aging is responsibile for many other programs for older adults besides the Donovan Fellowship. These will be mentioned in mini-paragraphs in the hope that you will want to secure something like them for yourselves.

1. Continuing Education - a home-grown program in some of the community colleges. The Council offers guidance to local committees of older persons in developing 16 clock-hour short courses. The content is based on expressed interests of older people. One person or a small committee, working with the extension office of the community college--puts the ideas into a workable format. Local people are found or outsiders recruited as volunteer teachers. Each course generally ends with a pot-luck supper and the ceremony of awarding "certificates of accomplishment."
2. The Writing Workshop for People Over 57. This nationally advertised program is limited to an enrollment of 50. Classes are taught in fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and script writing by people who are highly skilled and well known. The week-long program, now in its seventh year, has helped a number of men and women derive greater pleasure from their writing and some have published.
3. The Study-Travel-Study Seminar. Almost every year a group of

older people decide to go someplace. The group meets for a week or so to study where to go, what the problems of traveling will be, and to become acquainted so that we travel as friends. After returning home, there are several meetings to continue our study.

4. The Forum. Many older people share deep interests in the workd in which they live. The Forum presents an opportunity for them to meet in an academic setting on regular semester-long schedules. The White House Conference has provided the focus of attention for several semesters. The Forum has devoted a full semester to the study of great issues in American life with a view to proposing effective courses of action to keep our nation headed toward attainable goals of greatness. Now the students are preparing to make their knowledge, time, and talents available to help decision makers understand the problems they face and the options for solving them that are available.

Other institutions of higher education are also serving older people. In a recent study 50 letters mailed to the presidents of land grant colleges and universities and a total of 37 replies were received. The request was simple--too much so, perhaps, to get detailed information. This was what was asked:

Dear Mr. President:

As Director of the Council on Aging at the University of Kentucky, I am preparing a research paper on continuing education for older persons in the

United States. I would greatly appreciate receiving information regarding the availability of this type of education in the institutions of higher education in your state.

At the University of Kentucky, tuition-free education is offered to qualified persons over 65 through the Herman L. Donovan Fellowship Program. This program has been enthusiastically received, with attendance growing steadily each year since it began in 1964.

As colleges and universities in many other states have instituted similar programs, there is a need for a comprehensive picture of just what is available for people 65 and over, countrywide, and it is important to receive this information from each and every state.

The replies, while not overwhelming with opportunities, did reflect an awareness of the need for extending education to include older people. In a few places a very real beginning has been made. It just may be that a national pattern is beginning to emerge. With your help it may become a full-blown educational movement.

Of the 37 replies received 15 universities reported no identified programs for older people and no particular interest in developing any. There were eight institutions that reported having an interest in such programs but that they did not have any at the present time. In at least two places the outlines of programs are beginning to emerge while programs of one kind or another are to be found in eight institutions. Four presidents made reference to programs at campuses other than their own, usually community colleges.

The University of Connecticut waives tuition for people over 62 providing they are residents of the state. The Connecticut Fact Book on Aging (something each state should have) states,

> The University of Connecticut and four state colleges by state statute waive tuition fees and/or other charges for persons 62

years or older who have been accepted for admission. The 1971 legislative assembly is being asked to extend this waiver provision to the state's ten community colleges as well.

Apparently not many older persons are taking advantage of the opportunities available to them. The Fact Book states, "Despite the tuition waiver, registration among the elderly is low in the state's schools." Only 4 were matriculated in the four state colleges in the fall of 1970 while at the university and its branches there were four undergraduates, four graduate students and eleven unclassified.

The University of New Hampshire, also, waives tuition for older students. The age of eligibility is 65 and one must be a resident of the state. Dr. Thomas M. Bonner, President, writes:

> The Division of Continuing Education, University of New Hampshire, awards Senior Citizens Scholarships to any resident of New Hampshire who is 65 years of age or over for any credit or non-credit course which is not intended for professional development. Senior citizens are responsible for additional fees, if any, such as registration laboratory, and admission. A special form is completed by each applicant applying for a senior citizens fellowship. . . . If a course is offered conditionally (minimum of fifteen students), senior citizens are not counted as part of the required fifteen.

Another New England state with programs for older persons is the University of Vermont. As stated by R. V. Phillips, Dean, Continuing Education:

Citizens of the State of Vermont, sixty-five years and older, upon presentation of proof of residence and age are permitted to enroll as auditors in classes at the university without the payment of tuition fees.

In each of these instances, such enrollments must have permission of the Dean of the College concerned or in the case of Evening Divisions and Summer Sessions, permission of the Dean of Continuing Education, in order to safeguard overcrowding of any one class to the detriment of matriculated students.

Dean Phillips adds this note, "The policy has now been in existence for two years and has only moderate use. We would estimate that roughly a dozen people a year take advantage of this opportunity."

Still another eastern institution that accommodates older persons is the University of Rhode Island. The minimum age is 63 and one must be a resident of the state to qualify. The program which is quite new--fall semester, 1971--offers scholarships for credit and non-credit courses. Not many older persons are entering the program although it was announced throughout the state, according to Dr. George J. Dillavou, Dean, Division of University Extension.

For geographic variety attention is now turned to the southwest and the west. First, a look at the University of Oklahoma. Tuition is not waived at this school but there is a program that is quite popular with older persons. It is Bachelor of Liberal Studies. As Dr. J. E. Burkett, Assistant Vice President writes, "Of the 2,618 adults enrolled in this program through 1971, 421 were 51 years of age or older; 52 were 61 years of age or older; and 3 were 70 years of

age or older."

In Utah the age for entering programs for older persons is 55. The format here is somewhat different than previously reported in this paper in that only certain courses are open to people of this age group. They are, as listed by Dr. Sherman B. Sheffield, Dean, Division of Continuing Education:

1. Climate for Retirement - A study of the social and psychological problems of older persons in a youth-oriented society. Weekly classes, non-credit, $15 fee.

2. Adult Education, Abundant Living. The series was planned by the senior citizens and some of the lectures were delivered by senior citizens. Weekly classes, non-credit, 25¢ per lecture.

3. In planning --a class on consumerism for the aging individual.

Dean Sheffield added, "It has been our experience that many of our citizens over 55 years of age participate in a variety of programs in continuing education."

A different pattern for providing educational opportunities for older persons is in the Oregon State System of Higher Education, as reported by Chancellor R. E. Lieuallen, who writes:

> It is my pleasure to be able to assure you that you can continue your studies at Oregon State University in Corvallis, the University of Oregon in Eugene, Portland State University in Portland or at one of the state colleges located in Monmout, Ashland or La Grande. You will find a large variety of courses as each of the six institutions.
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> A special tuition rate of five dollars per term credit hour is provided for senior citizens (65 years or older) at each of the institutions mentioned above. In addition a special materials fee may be charged in a few of the courses. The fee of $5 per credit hour compares to a fee of $8.40 per credit hour charged to regular undergraduate students.

While not a Land Grant institution the experience in providing continuing education at Fairleigh Dickinson University, Madison, New Jersey, deserves mention. (See Supplement)

Continuing education for older persons is becoming a matter of world wide concern. After viewing the story of Donovan Scholars on nation wide television in Canada, Mr. John Turner, Minister of Finance, sent his deputy, Mr. Charles Kelley to Lexington for a first hand view of the program. In a recent letter Mr. Kelly reported that arrangements can be made by community leaders to provide Donovan-type programs in local universities through the national "New Horizons" plan. Dr. Ernst Jokl, a faculty member at the University of Kentucky has just returned from Swe den where he was asked to secure information about the Donovan program. He is arranging to have it described at an international conference in Germany in 1974. Dr. Barbara Tryfan, Chief, Rural Social Center in Warsaw, Poland was a recent campus visitor who came to study the Donovan program. Several months ago Dr. Brian Woodhouse from New Zealand came to the Council for the same purpose. At home, the Committee on Education of the House of Representatives in Michigan sent its financial analyst to the campus to observe the program and confer with university officials. His mission was to gather information to support legislation for similar programs on a statewide basis in Michigan.

Part II - Off Campus Programs

Educational programs for older persons are not limited to campuses of colleges and universities. However, it is appropriate that campus-bound staffs know about what is available elsewhere.

In almost everyone's home town there are programs of adult education sponsored by city or county boards of education. The value of many of these is that they get to all segments of society, the basic illiterates of which there are some four million over 65, as well as the more highly educated who, according to Billingsley, also need education for such functions as: 1. serving their communities, 2. achieve social interaction, 3. self-expression, 4. enhancement of the joy of living.[1] Usually the courses are short-term and often they are offered in neighborhood facilities, especially the elementary and secondary schools. There seems to be no limit to the subjects covered.

Most directors of adult education programs are quite anxious to provide the learning experiences people seek. The suggestion, therefore, is to ask.

Adult education departments often are required by departmental policy or sheer budgetary necessity to levy fees for instruction. This is often the only source of funds to pay the instructor, the janitor, and the utilities. It is not always the case and some departments average out the costs with high income producing classes covering the costs of those that don't pay their way.

The Older American's Act of 1965 provided the first real impetus to rolling back the limits of aging for older people. Through Title III a sum of money was made available to each state that had an acceptable plan (all states do now) to support programs developed in local communities. The grants required dollar support from the home towns for the first three years after which no more federal funding was to be made. In Aging, the publication of the Administration on Aging,

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[1] Educational Services for the Aging, Jack Billingsley, University of Arizona, April 1971.

for May 1970 it is reported that 103,400 older Americans attended adult education classes and that 5,793 older persons received special short-term training. This is not an impressive report considering the 20 million plus people over 65 in America. Worse still, many projects have been terminated because local communities could not come up with the required matching funds. This was especially hurtful in rural areas and city ghettoes where the needs for continuing education are especially acute.

State Commissions on Aging now have staffs that can aid communities in securing Title III programs. Their addresses are readily available through the Governor's Office.

The Public Higher Education Act of 1965 provides still other programs for older people.

Through Title I, of the Higher Education Act, a number of exciting and valuable programs have been initiated. Here are a few:

University of Kentucky. A pilot Demonstration Project to Teach the Proper Uses of Medicare/Medicaid to older Persons: To demonstrate that older people can be taught to understand the provisions and limitations of Medicare/Medicaid.

University of Oklahoma. Model Critics Senior Citizens - Emeritus Program: To assist senior citizens. . . in developing capabilities for effective representation and planning.

University of South Carolina. Life Enrichment Program: A program of 18 non-credit courses to older adults with each class meeting once a week for three weeks, and including art, music, banking, real estate, law for the layman, preparation for retirement, family estate planning, etc.

Quinnipiac College, Connecticut. Educational Enrichment of Senior Citizens: To educate and counsel senior citizens of three communities in areas of social security, health, welfare, medicare, etc.

Edison, Florida, Junior College. Education for Retirement: To provide retired persons with opportunity to learn about the aging process, the problems involved and ways of solving them.

Memphis State University. Street Arts: Workshops and classes to develop latent artistic talents in art, music, and dramatics culminating in a "Street Arts" outdoor show.

National Organizations also are active in serving older people:

The National Retired Teachers Association and its public counterpart, the American Association of Retired Persons are pioneering in the field of adult education with a variety of innovative programs. Because of their enormous size, over 3,000,000 members, the associations are literally demolishing the boundaries of knowledge imposed upon older persons by a youth-work oriented society. There is scarcely a street in a remote hamlet or a crowded city that does not have someone who is a member of NRTA/AARP. Many of them are

organized into chapters and in each state there is one or more volunteers working as state officers to help the clubs develop viable programs. These leaders, in turn, are serviced by regional vice-presidents each of whom are responsible for several states. Over the whole membership is a president who has been elected by his peers to serve a two-year term. Supporting the entire organization is a highly qualified secretariate.

The activity of the NRTA/AARP of most immediate concern to educators is the Institutes for Lifetime Learning. Leroy Hixson is dean of this dynamic organization and Lawrence Carlson is associate dean. Their activities are so numerous that only a few are mentioned here, the Living and Learning classes which have been so successful in the Washington, D.C. and Long Beach California areas are now being extended to many communities across the nation. The limited staff is being pushed beyond the limits of human endurance by requests for help in starting classes.

In the meantime there are other resources available through these Associations. One is the library of radio and television tapes that present programs on timely subjects at practically no cost. One radio station in Kentucky has been broadcasting highly informative programs for quite some time. The Associations have recently been experimenting with extension courses written by some of the leading educators in the country. The newest venture is the summer vacation programs in which older people gather in camps and recreation areas, and on college campuses for a week or so of

genuine fun and fellowship in the healthy environment of nature's wonderland. If all of this is not enough you may want to take courses in helping other older persons complete their income tax reports. Just now the Associations are launching an exciting new project for extending the services and facilities of libraries to older people a truly fascinating way of providing educational opportunities for older people.

At the White House Conference on Aging in 1971 the Section on Education adopted this preamble:

> Education is a basic right for all persons of all age groups. It is continuous and henceforth one of the ways of enabling older people to have a full and meaningful life, and as a means of helping them develop their potential as a resource for the betterment of society.
>
> As Mr. Foster Pratt, the newly installed president of the AARP writes, "We have proved that retirement can be a beginning, not an end.
>
> New doors can be opened. New vistas can be revealed.
>
> New trails can be forged. New heights can be reached.
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> Retirement can be the first time in our lives when we can find true opportunity for service, for involvement, for concern."

It is true: Learning knows no age limit.

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